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Stadium, where most village football matches are played, are in themselves evidence that fights during these occasions are the rule rather than the exception.

Although there is little formal contact between villages, there is a considerable amount of informal coming and going between their inhabitants. Most inter-village marriages are between partners from neighbouring villages, and the network of kin ties that these form helps to bind the villages of a district together. Inhabitants of neighbouring villages travel to and from work on the same buses, and see each other often at the annual feasts of the district. These multiple relations contribute to a certain district spirit. The most striking example is the unity of the Gozitans, although people from the south of Malta have something of the same spirit of belonging to a particular district. Nonetheless, the knowledge the inhabitants of the southern Maltese villages have of each other cannot be compared to that of the Gozitans, who, for the most part, not only recognize each other by face, name and nickname, but usually know a surprising (and often uncomfortable) amount of personal details about one another.

IV

A person becomes a member of a village by being born there, or marrying or moving into it. The administrative details connected with these acts are quite simple. Parents must register the birth of a child at the local police station, and the parish priest enters the child's name in his register when the baby is baptized, which usually takes place within a few days of its birth. If a man marries into a village, his name will be entered in the parish register, for under Church law the marriage must be performed by the parish priest of the bride, or his delegate. If the couple settles in the husband's village or in a strange village, their names will be recorded on the annual census there, the *status animarum*, which every parish priest prepares for his bishop. All changes of address are supposed to be given (but often are not) to the Rationing Office and, if the person is over twenty-one, to the Electoral Office. No other civil authorities are interested in a person's whereabouts.

In point of fact, however, most people live in the villages into which they were born. This is another respect in which the towns

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proportional to the number of outsiders resident in it. Not only does loyalty to friends and relations in a man's village of birth often take precedence over new ties established by his marriage into a strange village, but it is not unusual for a man married into another village to continue to play an active part in the social life of his native village. Conversely, an outsider is seldom called upon or attempts to join the clubs and associations of his wife's village. Thus, only 3 per cent of the committee members of the fifteen band and social clubs in the sample villages I studied were outsiders, although about 18 per cent of the adult male population resident in these villages were born elsewhere. On the other hand, 5 per cent of the committee members were now living outside the villages in which they were born and hold office.

TABLE 2. Adults Born Outside their Place of Residence[1]

Place of Residence	*Percentage born elsewhere*	*Males*	*Females*
Urban/Suburban	66%	45%	55%
Maltese Villages	16	52	48
Gozitan Villages	15	39	61

Because of the many ties which bind people to their villages of birth, an adult who moves into his wife's village remains an outsider for many years. The village will probably not give him a distinctive village nickname, and he will be known simply as the husband of his wife, or perhaps by the name of his native village. Although the village may ignore his outside origin for much of the time, his place of birth is certain to be remembered and held against him by his enemies, should be become involved in a dispute. The children of an outsider, however, become full members of the village by virtue of their birth there, and their connection with the community through the family of their mother (or father). By the time his children begin to grow up and get married, the outsider is usually firmly established as a full member of the community.

[1] This table was compiled from data made available to me by the Principal Government Electoral Officer. It covers a random sample drawn from a sample of two suburban communities (Sliema and Balzan), seven Maltese villages (Zebbuġ, Għargħur, Gudja, Mosta, Qrendi, Dingli and Żurrieq) and three Gozitan villages (Qala, Xagħra and Għarb).

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208 578 665 795 walls and shouted at public meetings. Mintoff is portrayed as a Socialist devil working to give the islands over to Communism in the manner of Cuba's Castro. These are some typical examples of the ones that appeared on the blackboard outside the Kortin Catholic Action centre: 'Mintoff is the enemy of the Church', 'Nobody can serve both God and the Devil', '"The Bishops are interfering in politics!" That is what Communists say,' and 'We don't want Communists among us!' In stating their case, Mintoff and his supporters did not mince words either, as the following slogans that appeared on the blackboard of the Kortin Labour Party club demonstrate: 'We want a chance in court about the $60,000 lie',[1] 'With the Papal flag in their hands and shouting for vengeance', 'A fish begins to stink from its head',[2] and 'In Gozo they told the women that we have tails.'

208 578 665 794 795 The popular slogan 'Either with the Bishop or against the Church!' sums up the uncompromising attitude of the Church. Most of the sanctions it has imposed have presented that choice to the people in unequivocal terms. Early in May 1961, shortly after the Labour leaders were interdicted, all Church lay societies were instructed to obtain from each member a pledge of his full and unqualified support for the Archbishop. Those that declined to give this were expelled from the society concerned and their names reported to the national office of Catholic Action. But a more drastic sanction was imposed a few weeks later. After the [783] Executive of the Labour Party had invited the Archbishop and the [626] Bishop of Gozo to debate their policy in public at a Labour rally in Cospicua, the Bishops replied to this insult by issuing a circular which declared it a mortal sin to print, write for, sell, buy, distribute or read the Labour Party newspapers. All confessors were instructed to put the necessary questions to their penitents.

578 665 794 795 Hence, to remain a Labour supporter, a person has to forego the Church sacraments that he has been brought up to believe vital to his happiness and spiritual salvation. This is a very serious choice for a practising Catholic, and before these sanctions were imposed, the Maltese were among the most devoutly Catholic [851] people in the world. It has also meant that MLP supporters cannot [608]

[1] This refers to the Archbishop's charge, made at a rally in March 1961, that Mintoff had received $61,000 from the allegedly Communist dominated Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, which the MLP had just joined.

[539] [2] A Maltese proverb meaning that corruption first becomes apparent among people in high places. This was presumably directed against the Archbishop.

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act as godparents. For this reason a number of people, prevented from inviting relatives and friends to fill this office, have preferred not to baptize their children.

Many have bowed to the authority of the Church and have stopped supporting the Labour Party. But in spite of everything that has been preached on the subject, many others still feel that there is nothing incompatible between support of their political leader and loyalty to their religion. This view is expressed in the slogan which is displayed so often at MLP rallies that it has become almost a party motto: 'With Mintoff always, against the Church never.' Although they are told from the pulpit that it does them no good, most members of the Labour Party continue to attend the daily or weekly services of worship that they have been going to since childhood. Besides, many have rationalized their action by saying that the Archbishop of Malta is acting for personal and political motives; as long as the Pope himself does not condemn the MLP they will continue to support it. This attitude is reinforced by the experience of some Labour supporters who have been absolved while on holiday or on duty with the military services in countries where it is possible to be a Socialist and a practising Catholic at the same time.

As a result of these sanctions many have turned their backs on the Church and no longer attend religious services. Before this struggle between the MLP and the Church, it would have been unthinkable for anyone in a small village to stay away from church. A civil servant in one village told me that he had been a confirmed atheist for years. Yet until this past year he had gone to church every Sunday. In his words, 'People make it very difficult for someone who does not go to church, and I have to live here all my life. Besides, I might lose my job if people complained about me.' But he is now an open supporter of the Labour Party and no longer feels obliged to go to church. To some extent, then, the sanctions of the Church have created a social role for the non-practising Catholic.

The attitude of many who support the Labour Party is summed up in the words of a twenty-year-old bus conductor in Kortin. We were sitting around a table in a small wine shop when I asked him why he supported the MLP in spite of the opposition of the Church to it and the fact that Mintoff was regarded as a Communist by so many in the village. He replied in English, 'I am